

To the Members of the California State Senate:

I am returning Senate Bill 515 without my signature.

California is fortunate to be home to one of the largest populations of Armenians outside the Republic of Armenia, and the Armenian-American community contributes much to our state and nation. The creation of an Armenia trade office was prudent in 2002 when the Legislature instituted the office.

Since then, the Legislature has closed all other trade offices throughout the world and last year passed legislation mandating the creation of a state international trade strategy. The Business, Transportation, and Housing Agency is required to complete an International Trade and Investment strategy to recommend priorities for state activities by February 1, 2008. Also, the state is prohibited from establishing any new foreign office until the Legislature receives a strategy to guide the operation and activities of the office and provides statutory authority for implementing the strategy. The State's involvement in foreign trade offices should be determined by the process set forth by the Legislature last year. This bill is premature before that process is completed.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger